

**REMARKS**

Independent claim 18, and claims 13-15 and 17, are presented for consideration. Dependent claim 16 has been cancelled. Independent claim 18 replaces cancelled claim 12, and has been drafted to overcome the rejection under 35 USC §112 advanced in the Final Rejection.

The specification and drawings have been revised, in minor respects, to provide better support for applicant's invention, as claimed. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter.

Independent claim 18 compares the height of the components of applicant's unique coupling relative to base 3 of the inverted T-beam. Thus, a consistent standard is established for measurement of such dimension.

The location of tooth 16, in depending leg 14, and the manner in which the leading edge of such tooth is bent out of the plane of leg 14, is positively recited; the acute angle at which the tooth extends away from leg 14 is also noted. The manner in which outer portion 10 of appendix 2 is bent into two legs 12, 14 and joined by bent portion 15 is also positively recited. The cooperation of the structural components of applicant's coupling enables the coupling to fit into a rectangular aperture 18 in the central web 4 of a second inverted T-beam, without using specific tools to lock the beams together. The free end of tooth 16 locks the web of the inverted T-beam into engagement with projection 20 in aperture 18.

Applicant's coupling can be released from its locked position by squeezing, or pinching, depending leg 14 inwardly toward leg 12. The pinching action releases tooth 16 from engagement with the projection in aperture 18, and the inverted T-beam can be withdrawn, in a straight line, and without a twisting action, as required by Koski. The straight line withdrawal provides applicant with a significant operational advantage over known couplings used for joining T-beams together.

Other shortcomings of Koski (U.S. Patent No. 5,687,528) have been stressed, in detail, in the Remarks of the Amendment of November 12, 2008, and are not repeated at this juncture.

Attorney for applicant has attempted to address each objection/rejection raised by the Examiner to place the instant application in condition for allowance. As a minimum, entry of the

Amendment is sought to place the application in better condition for appeal. However, if the Examiner believes that a personal interview would resolve any issue in contest, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney to conduct a telephone conference, or arrange a personal interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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